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ABSTRACT

Discussed in some detail is the policy statement of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) concerning the English teacher workload, which states (briefly) (1) in order to make it possible for English teachers in secondary schools to give an accountable performance, schools and their communities must recognize that maintaining class sizes and teacher workload at desirable levels is a vital part of the community's accountability to its teachers and its youth; (2) the teacher of English should have direct instructional responsibility for no more than 100 students; (3) a ratio for English teacher workload in a given school must be determined by discussions among local teachers, administrators, and laymen following a detailed analysis of local conditions; and (4) after determining desirable workloads for English teachers, schools should set specific target dates for progress toward attainment of desirable loads. Chapters provide a discussion of the background on English teacher workload, a discussion of factors which point to larger or smaller English teacher workload, and a discussion of "the factor tree," a device for deciding on an optimum workload for English teachers. (HOD)

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Workload for English Teachers: Policy and Procedure

by the Ad Hoc Committee on English
Teacher Workload in Secondary Schools,
National Council of Teachers of English,
Henry B. Maloney, Chairman

CS 200 640

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Preface

The following policy statement on English teacher workload is addressed to administrators, school boards, parents, and the public. At a time when economic pressures on the schools are great, it is difficult to make proposals which suggest greater expenditures. And it is particularly difficult to propose that such expenditures be focused in one department in the secondary schools. However, the importance of communication skills in the lives of young people and the relationship between mastery of these skills and success in other school subjects indicate that such a priority should be established.

The National Council of Teachers of English is a professional association of some 100,000 members and subscribers devoted to the improvement of instruction in the English language arts. A critical aspect of effective instruction in English is the size and number of classes that English teachers are responsible for. The physical, psychological, and intellectual burdens placed on English teachers by large classes and heavy teaching loads can have but one result: a reduction in efficiency and effectiveness of instruction in this central part of the school curriculum. Even seasoned critics of practices in American schools agree "that the English teacher who faces five classes of thirty students per day is carrying an intolerable load."*

Today, class sizes, and consequently the workload of the English teacher, are increasing. As a professional organization, we have a duty to present to the public and to its agents—boards of education and school administrators—a policy which argues for a reversal of this trend.

There is little question that English teachers can survive large classes

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**Bulletin* of the Council for Basic Education, (May 1972), p. 12.

and heavy loads. The burden of loss, however, will fall upon the students, because the amount of individual attention, the amount of care, the amount of energy that a teacher can devote to students is finite. The greater the number of students the teacher must care for, the smaller the share of the teacher's time each student may have. On the other hand, we fully recognize that English teachers with smaller workloads must assume greater responsibility for the development of each student.

We ask your careful reading of the following pages and urge you to examine thoughtfully the workload of English teachers in your local district. The students are your responsibility. Ultimately, you are responsible for the kind of education they receive in the various skills and understandings that comprise the English program. Your attention to the following pages will help to fulfill that responsibility.

Henry Maloney, Chairman,
Ad Hoc Committee on English
Teacher Workload in Secondary Schools

NCTE Policy on Class Size and Teacher Workload

A. In order to make it possible for English teachers in secondary schools to give an accountable performance, schools and their communities must recognize that maintaining class sizes and teacher workload at desirable levels is a vital part of the community's accountability to its teachers and its youth.

B. In the early 1960s the National Council of Teachers of English pronounced its conviction that the teacher of English should have direct instructional responsibility for no more than 100 students. Despite changes in schools and in society, the goal of a student-to-teacher ratio of 100:1 for English teachers continues to be a valid and useful guideline for many thousands of schools. For a small but significant number of schools, however, the ratio may be too high; for a small fraction of schools, the ratio may be too low. Although the 100:1 ratio has become inadequate as a guide to English-teacher workload for *all* secondary schools, it remains a desirable guideline for most.

C. A ratio for English teacher workload in a given school must be determined by discussions among local teachers, administrators, and laymen following a detailed analysis of local conditions. This analysis should consider the characteristics of student population, the type and extent of educational innovation occurring, the pressure on teachers for professional growth, their participation in extra duties and student activities, the organization and administration of the school, and the community's expectations of English instruction.

D. After determining desirable workloads for English teachers, schools should, in the light of current and anticipated economic conditions, set specific target dates for progress toward attainment of desirable loads. Attainment of the final goal for teacher workload should not be delayed more than five years from the date when analysis of local conditions is begun.

Adopted November 1972

Chapter One

Background on English Teacher Workload

Late in the 1950s, members of NCTE began to speak of a "100:1" ratio as the desired workload for a secondary school teacher of English. The phrase "100:1" was a notice to adminstrators, the public, and the profession at large that with more than 100 students per day, an English teacher could not do what was expected. Because the ratio statement called for a radical shift from workloads of 125 and even 200 students per day, the ratio was not received enthusiastically by most school boards and administrators. The 100:1 ratio was an assertion by experienced practitioners that under adverse workloads teachers of English could not be expected to meet their own and society's goals for English instruction. This burden of numbers was felt particularly by teachers who stressed written composition. Subsequently, concern about the need for improvement in written composition led James Conant to reiterate the Council's position in the recommendations of his influential book, *The American High School Today,* in 1959.

Conant's recommendation had some effect. Many schools in the early 1960s made substantial sacrifices to attain the 100:1 ratio, and others came close to the ideal. But the number of such schools was small compared with the tens of thousands of schools where the ratio could have applied.

Despite what might appear as a lack of immediate success, the 100:1 ratio served as a touchstone and a strong indicator of the direction in which English teacher workload should have been heading.

One trend in the 1960s that appeared to, but did not, improve the English teacher's load was the gradual lowering of the ratio of students to adults in secondary schools. The lowering of the student/adult ratio resulted from the introduction of more total staff into the schools: librarians, counselors, psychologists, psychometricians, administrators,

some teachers, and, later in the decade, paraprofessionals. Admittedly, the lower student/adult ratios permitted better services to pupils and frequently made possible smaller sections in advanced foreign languages, developmental and remedial reading, and other subjects. The effect on teacher workload in required, mainstream subjects such as English, however, appeared negligible. The English teacher's workload, at best, remained the same.

A second trend in the 1960s was the restructuring of the school staff and the school day: team teaching was increasingly used; paraprofessionals entered more classrooms; the day was divided into "modules"; some students began independent study and only occasionally saw the teacher; a few used programmed instruction and met teachers in mass groups infrequently if at all; and, toward the end of the decade, uncounted thousands met with teachers in irregular time blocks or in far shorter blocks than semesters or terms. Though these changes in use of staff, time, and space were not universal, stating the characteristics of a desirable workload for English teachers in light of such changes became difficult.

As the 1970s began, cutbacks in expenditures became a central concern in the society at large and also in the schools. Imperceptibly and unannounced, class sizes and teacher workloads began to rise. The trend to undesirable teaching conditions, though uneven, was clear, and indications were that workloads would continue to increase as the economic squeeze continued.

In the spring of 1971, the NCTE Commission on the English Curriculum began a study of class size in relation to learning. One product of its effort was a resolution passed at the 1971 convention which declared that increased class size and English teacher workload was of great concern to the membership and asked that this concern be addressed to the profession and the public as promptly as possible. The resolution did not, however, reassert the 100:1 ratio, for the members who passed the resolution took the view that that ratio did not appear to account for present conditions brought about largely by organizational changes in many schools. The Executive Committee of NCTE took action on the resolution by calling the Ad Hoc Committee on English Teacher Workload to explore what kind of statement on class size and teacher workload might be made in view of current conditions.

At the outset of its deliberations in January 1972 this Committee agreed with the resolution: things indeed had changed, at least in many school districts. The structural changes in the school day and the reallocation of human and material resources had been compounded by other factors: changes in attitudes and work habits of students, changes in

the attitude of communities toward schools, changes in the assertiveness of cultural groups in the communities, changes in the school's commitment to meet the needs of students at extreme ends of the achievement scale, changes in attitude and outlook among new (and many experienced) teachers, changes in curriculum, some of which seemed to point to far smaller groups than what was thought necessary in 1960, changes in the technology of teaching, and other changes, each of which, it seemed to the Committee, pointed to the need for a more modern, more complex, and more sensitive policy on teacher workload than the 100:1 ratio statement.

The Committee thought extensively about the economic, psychological and pedagogical import of the numerical ratio and concluded that, despite its present shortcomings, the 100:1 policy had served an important purpose and could continue to serve as an important guideline for thousands of schools where workloads are harmfully high and appear to be rising. The Committee thought it anomalous that at the same time that school boards were asking English teachers to be accountable, teacher workloads were rising. The Committee supported the view that teachers of English are and should be held accountable, but maintained that accountability is a two-way transaction. School boards, administrators, and the community are accountable for providing conditions in which it is reasonable for teachers to be held accountable for student learning. Desirable class size and teacher workload are prime elements in the community's accountability to its teachers.

At a higher level of accountability, the school board member and the administrator must be concerned about the kinds of learning environments that are provided for children and youth. The Institute for Administrative Research (IAR) at Columbia University, after one of the most extensive studies of classrooms ever made, concluded that class size is a critical factor in the presence or absence of important "indicators of quality" in classrooms. As classes grow smaller, said IAR, the probability increases that creative experiences, good interpersonal relationships, individualized instruction, and small-group work will occur. The opposite, a stultifying, depersonalized, dehumanized environment, tends to form as classes grow larger.*

As the English teacher's workload increases, composition instruction is the first element to be adversely affected: writing assignments may be

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*Martin N. Olson, "Identifying Quality in School Classrooms: Some Problems and Some Answers," *Metropolitan Schools Study Council Exchange* 25 (9), 1971.

reduced or eliminated; the span of time between writing and feedback from the teacher may lengthen; teachers' written comments may shift from substantial, personal observations to cryptic notations or to no notations at all or to simply a grade; conferences between teachers and pupils may be eliminated for lack of time; and small instructional groups attuned to individual writing needs may become increasingly rare. Classes may begin to hear the teacher talk about writing in the abstract rather than about the writing of individual students in personal situations.

The outcome of such departures from desirable classroom practices can only be a deepening of the deficiencies in student writing already reported from early studies by the National Assessment of Educational Progress.† School boards and administrators need to contemplate these matters as they plan class size and workload for English teachers.

The NCTE Committee on English Teacher Workload, rather early in its deliberation, settled upon the importance of local (even school-by-school) statements of optimum English teacher workload. A proper pupil/teacher ratio should be determined by close, cooperative analysis of a number of critical factors, each of which warrants increasing or decreasing teacher workload from an idealized figure. In many schools, the automatic adoption of a 100:1 ratio could be harmful. For example, in a school with a high incidence of teacher inexperience, a shortage of human and material resources, conflict between the school and the community, poor reading achievement, student transiency, or severe discipline problems—in such a school the ratio might properly be substantially less. Adherence to a single ratio like 100:1 for such schools would be inappropriate in the face of conditions.

Among the factors which might allow higher than average teacher workload would be stability of population, a close correspondence between the values of the community and the values of the schools, an unchanging curriculum, teacher-centered and text-centered instruction, obedient and self-motivated students, a substantial supply of human and material resources, and an acceptance of mass teaching as the major methodology. While a combination of these factors would not necessarily mean that better education is occurring, they could add up to a less serious need for smaller classes, since the physical and psychological load of larger English classes might be tolerable. Effective teaching and learning can

†"Survey Finds U.S. Youth Unskilled in Written English," *The New York Times*, February 3, 1972 (see also *National Assessment Report 8*, available from Education Commission of the States, 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver Colorado 80203).

happen, of course, under extraordinarily heavy workload conditions; some teachers manage somehow and manage well under adverse workload conditions. But the probabilities that such achievement can continue diminish sharply as larger numbers exhaust the teacher's physical and psychological energy.

Most schools lie between the two extremes sketched above, and they are affected by the factors mentioned (and others) to a greater or lesser degree. In arriving at workload policies, each school must consider all of the factors which bear upon class size and English teacher workload.

Furthermore, such a consideration should be a mutual deliberation involving teachers, administrators, laymen, and if possible, students. English teachers, on the one hand, must recognize the professional and economic pressures on administrators when workload for one department is considered apart from the workload of other departments. But administrators, on the other hand, must recognize the professional and public pressures on English teachers to achieve results in one of the most central of the school's obligations: to produce citizens with the maximum possible control of the skills and arts of language. It is inescapable that the bulk of what a student is expected to demonstrate after graduation is central matter in English classes.

There are, of course, at any given moment, pressing economic conditions upon schools which may deny immediate reduction in class size and teacher load. Nonetheless, schools can set targets for themselves, targets which, over time, will lead to the achievement of desirable class size and workload for English teachers.

Having resolved these points, the NCTE Committee next recognized that it had to provide a means, a technique, by which local administrators, laymen, and teachers together might analyze their circumstances and arrive at a rational decision on optimum class size and teacher workload for effective English instruction. The policy statement prepared by the Committee was approved by the NCTE Board of Directors at their annual meeting in November 1972.

So that efforts toward the goal of determining an appropriate workload for English teachers can proceed systematically, the NCTE Committee prepared a worksheet employing a "force field" technique, which local groups can use in discussions leading to a desirable class size and teacher workload statement for English teachers. The technique is described in Chapter 3 of this pamphlet.

The Committee recommends prompt, earnest, and willing study of the question of English teacher workload by local groups of laymen, administrators, and teachers. Through such study, a definition of a proper workload for English teachers and a schedule for reaching a carefully defined workload statement can be attained.

Chapter Two

Factors Which Point to Larger or Smaller English Teacher Workload

Sometimes workloads for teachers—usually expressed in ratios of so many students to so many teachers—have been arrived at rationally; more often they have been arrived at merely by custom. Because workload is so important in determining what happens during instruction, it is essential that rational policies on workload be established in local school districts.

The following pages set forth and comment on the major factors which should be discussed by local school personnel and their public to the end that rational policies on workload for English teachers are established.

There seem to be three groupings of factors which bear upon workload. First are the school/community-setting factors, which tend to be rather fixed and slow to change and which constitute an important part of the teaching environment. The second group of factors are those responsibilities and duties which English teachers share in common with most other teachers, though such factors often touch English teachers in unique ways. The third group are duties and responsibilities which fall most heavily, almost exclusively, on English teachers and which constitute the major argument for determining special workload policies for English teachers.

Factors in the School-Community Setting

Factor 1: Characteristics of the Student Population

Student attitudes toward school can have major importance in decisions about desirable class size. Where students are generally eager to learn, cooperative, skilled, and well behaved, the factor of student attitude toward schooling is not by itself significant in arguments for smaller class size and teacher workload. Since the 1960s, however, students have generally become less passive as a result of the effects of changes in the social atmosphere of the community and nation.

Where students are restive, antagonistic, and disobedient, it takes more time, more thorough planning, and a higher degree of individual contact to keep the educational process going. The current and probably desirable tendency of students to argue, question, and challenge established order speaks very clearly for smaller class size and teacher workload.

Where students are generally deficient in basic skills, greater individual attention is needed. Under even the best of circumstances, the range of skills exhibited by secondary school students–particularly their language skills–is wide and requires a high degree of individualized attention, attention which is usually possible only when a teacher's workload is kept low.

Where there is a high degree of mobility in the student population, there is also greater need for individual service to students. Movement from place to place, school to school, is unsettling and creates discontinuity in academic and social experience. If class size is kept low, the individualized skills program of the English curriculum and also the literature program–with the power of literature to help students find themselves in time and place–can help students contend with the problems of mobility.

Factor 2: Community Values and Expectations

The values and goals of the community have important bearing on the classroom. Where parents have little respect for schooling and little experience with schools, parental attitudes impinge on student attitudes, and tensions between home and school can result.

Where parents who are otherwise well educated have failed to keep pace with or to understand changes in the broader society, cultural tensions can develop between the local community and those faculties–particularly English faculties–which are attempting to prepare students for life in the wider and changing society.

When tension exists over goals and values, teaching becomes very difficult. More time and effort is required to explain, to plan lessons, to provide contrasting points of view and experiences, to discuss cultural differences, and to help students find their way through a maze of tensions.

In those parts of the curriculum where values and goals are especially central matters–in English and social studies particularly–a discontinuity of values between the school and the community can create, in addition to time pressures, a high degree of psychological stress on teachers. Where such discontinuity exists, smaller class size and reduced teacher load can help teachers to work effectively.

Where there is no discontinuity and the community and its teachers are in concord about values and goals, one might argue that larger classes are tolerable. But the community must keep in mind that a great part of what it expects as results from twelve years of schooling is contained in the English curriculum: fluency, logical use of language, sensitivity to social situations, awareness of others, compassion, and, in general, power over circumstances through the use of language. Because English bears so much of the community's expectations of the total school program, it is not reasonable to think of English as "just another subject."

It is commonplace today to speak of the accountability of teachers to the community. Accountability is not possible until the necessary resources for tasks to be accomplished are supplied. At the least, given the central place of English in the community's expectations, this means smaller class sizes and smaller workloads for English teachers. When these are provided, the community's search for accountability will be reasonable.

Factor 3: The Physical Plant

It is unfortunate but true that the physical plant—its space and how space is divided within it—has major bearing on class size and therefore workload. How to divide so many students into so much space has ever been the administrator's quandary. While recent school construction has provided open, flexible space, the great majority of older secondary schools suffer from relatively fixed dimensions. Classes can, of course, be smaller than, say, thirty in an older building; but lack of space in the rest of the building to accommodate students displaced by smaller classes has too often been used as a major excuse for not adjusting class size in accord with modern instructional needs.

The physical plant must be recognized as a factor in decisions about class size and teacher load, but it must be recognized as only one factor among many. When all of the factors have been considered and decisions have been reached about workload policies, problems of physical space can be solved.

Factor 4: Financial Resources Available

The economic resources available to a school system are relatively fixed by law, by political realities, and by the economic circumstances of the surrounding community or, in some cases, the state. Teachers, when requesting downward adjustments in class size, must recognize the reality of relatively fixed dollar income and the fact that reduced class size and lessened teacher workload cost money.

But the fact of limited general income to the school district does not necessarily block discussions of class size. Within every school system's budget there is usually substantial flexibility. Money, equipment, and people can be rearranged to meet the critical needs of children and youth, but the community must first decide what must be accomplished. Then it becomes the task of administration to rearrange resources in ways designed to produce desired effects. Smaller class size and improved teacher workload increase the probability that desired effects will be reached, especially in English classes (see Factors 11-14 below).

Factor 5: Supportive Staff and Resources

As noted earlier, the 1960s showed an increase in the number and variety of supportive staff—teacher aides, lay readers, counselors, subject consultants, reading specialists, clerks, and others. These have tended to reduce the workload of the classroom teacher. But not completely. The teacher must supervise many of the paraprofessionals and must expend time and effort relating to the larger number of persons involved in the life of the student. To argue that increased support-personnel means that the teacher has less to do distorts the reason for the paraprofessional, whose function is to permit the teacher to do more significant work, not less work.

Similarly, the contemporary profusion of material resources has also seemed to make the teacher's workload more manageable. Resource centers, useful curriculum guides, a multiplicity of text materials, media libraries, and so forth ease the teacher's task of creating, borrowing, and finding materials. The load is only partly reduced, however, because the teacher must spend more time being aware of the wider range of materials, managing them, and relating to others who manage material resources.

At some future time, perhaps, the technology of education may help with managing the profusion of materials. The rudimentary beginnings of dial-access centers, learning labs, programmed instruction, computer-managed instruction, and other developing aspects of educational technology may help, but the current state of technology does not suggest that the teaching of English will soon be able to change from its present "labor intensive" patterns. In subjects such as English, where verbal and physical interaction is vital to the development of complex social skills, the promise of educational technology seems further from reality than in subjects in which rote, mechanical skills are central.

Nonetheless, the school district which has supplied a rich variety of human and material resources to support instruction has acted to alleviate the workload of the secondary English teacher. The lack of such supportive resources points to the need for smaller classes and reduced workload.

Factors Which Are Part of the Teacher's General Professional Responsibility

Factor 6: The Number and Kinds of Preparation

The critical task of class preparation varies widely according to the nature of the student body, the nature of the subject, the materials available, the teacher's training–so many variables that one cannot generalize about the effect on workload of multiple preparations. Usually, guidelines on workload declare that "no more than two" preparations should be required. Ideally, of course, no two classes can (or should) be conducted in the same way; hence, a teacher who has five classes has, inescapably, five preparations, each requiring careful attention.

Nevertheless, the number of substantially different preparations affects the teacher's workload. Where more than two preparations (which means gathering materials, specifying objectives, planning activities, knowing the content, etc.) are required, workload should be reduced. For English teachers, for whom individualization of the skills curriculum is absolutely necessary, the multiple-preparation assignment weighs heavily.

Factor 7: Curriculum Development and Innovation

Workload is substantially affected when teachers are expected to keep the curriculum up-to-date and changing, according to trends, needs, and new insights into knowledge and the process of learning. In addition to curriculum development, teachers are involved in school-wide innovations such as team teaching, modular scheduling, performance contracting, "independent learning" arrangements, school-within-a-school restructuring, and similar instructional and administrative innovations.

Each part of curriculum development and each experience with an innovation takes time and effort. The school and the public need to recognize that the change process affects workload. A few enlightened districts do recognize this need and reduce the workload of individuals or groups involved in change, at least during the difficult and time-consuming beginning phases of change.

Similarly, contacts with outside agencies concerned with change–accrediting agencies, state departments of education, systems analysts, and state university experts–require time and effort from teachers, who usually receive no reduction in workload to account for such contacts. Work with change agents is too often initiated with the implicit assumption that the teacher has a stock of uncommitted time to devote to such contacts.

When districts heavily involved in change do not reduce teacher loads, they risk harming the current instructional program. Workloads must be reduced in such circumstances to prevent harm to students.

Factor 8: Curriculum Evaluation and Research Responsibilities

Increasingly, schools have become involved in curriculum evaluation and research. Part of that activity derives from the idea of accountability and from a concern about the dollar-return on educational investments. Part comes from university researchers skilled in new design and statistical techniques that promise to tell much more about learning than was possible only a short while ago. But most activity stems from the realization within school districts that it is a proper part of teaching to evaluate learning in order to improve the process.

Whatever the source, the facts are that evaluation and research efforts in local districts are growing, and such activity takes time and effort. Conferring with researchers, adapting classroom patterns to fit research needs, controlling variables, making internal arrangements, assisting in the gathering and interpretation of data–all of these add to teacher workload, and the effect on workload is not usually recognized.

In districts where evaluating student performance is considered a priority activity, planners must realize that evaluation is time and effort consuming and that outmoded workload policies must be accordingly revised to prevent harm to the continuing instructional program.

Factor 9: Responsibilities for Professional Growth and Involvement

Two of the major lines of inservice development of staff are various kinds of professional-growth courses taken within the district or at colleges and universities and involvement in the activities and programs of professional subject-matter organizations. It is unnecessary here to argue the virtues of inservice education; the overwhelming majority of districts require such effort by teachers for fairly obvious reasons.

While, theoretically, the taking of courses is compensated by advancements in salary "tracks" or "levels" or by reimbursement of expenses or both, the efforts of the teacher to be professionally aware and active are at best partly compensated.

A community which expects its teachers to grow professionally must grant that such growth-effort impinges on total workload. For those teachers who go beyond minimal growth requirements and become leaders in the state and nation, reduction of their workload is warranted by the benefits to the faculty and to the community which these teachers bring.

Factor 10: Other Responsibilities

English teachers share with other teachers three kinds of nonteaching duties which affect total workload: (1) student activities (such as the drama group, the yearbook, the pep squad), which are often assigned with accompanying compensation of only a modest sort; (2) all-school committees (for example, the principal's advisory committee), which are not ordinarily assigned equitably among the staff; and (3) such duties as hall and lunchroom monitoring, chaperoning, and even money collecting. With only a finite amount of teacher time and effort available, these "other" responsibilities weigh heavily on workload decisions. The manner and pattern of assignments to such duties–especially to English teachers–must be examined. The assumption is too often made that the after-school life of all teachers is the same, while, as will be pointed out below, the English teacher, by the nature of his or her work, has especially heavy after-school responsibilities.

Factors Almost Uniquely the Responsibility of English Teachers

Factor 11: The Teaching of Written Compositions

The results of the first round of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, released in 1971 and 1972, point to inadequate results in the teaching of written composition. It was the problem of written composition that led to initial NCTE concern about English teacher workload and to the 1961 policy calling for no more than 100 students per teacher.*

Heavy workloads for English teachers have substantial and harmful effects on the teaching of written composition. Studies have shown that paper grading and commenting alone have added more than twenty hours per week to the homework of the teacher, such time added onto the usual tasks of planning lessons, keeping records, and carrying out other duties which the English teacher has in common with other teachers.

When teaching loads are heavy in English classes, there are fewer writing assignments, insufficient written responses by the teacher, and little individual guidance to the student on how to improve his writing. It is no surprise that students returning from college rather commonly charge that their high schools did not prepare them for the rigors of college writing.

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*The NAEP results of 1972 are testimony to the fact that American schools did not, by and large, heed the NCTE 100:1 recommendation.

Modern practice in written composition has placed another time requirement on the teacher's workday: the critically important conferences with the students about their writing. Writing is communication and requires far more response than red marks in a margin. All students need and are entitled to conference time with their teachers about their writing achievements. But such conferences are not possible when the teacher must relate to 150 or more students per week.

Skill in written composition is a constant and continuing concern among English teachers. The workload of a teacher who conscientiously attempts to develop writing skill is punishing. Not surprisingly, some teachers, against their professional consciences, more or less abandon the task and move to talking to classes *about* writing rather than teaching individual students to write. Fortunately, most others persist against heavy odds and make what progress they can under the circumstances.

The community must ask itself whether it wants greater competence in written composition. If so, it must press for conditions which will make greater competence possible. Central in such conditions are smaller English classes and a reduced workload for the English teacher.

Factor 12: Reading Skills Development

Teachers of English have the responsibility to continue and extend the reading skills development program begun in the elementary schools. Secondary school English teachers, by and large, are not trained to teach elementary reading skills, though they are often asked to do so. On the other hand, the skills of reading comprehension, vocabulary development, reading in special subject fields, inferential and interpretative reading, and a welter of complex reading skills necessary to the reading of literature are very much part of English teachers' work and rightfully should be recognized as reading skills development.

To handle basic reading skills problems, many schools employ reading teachers, to whom students go for special assistance. While this practice helps, the English teacher is usually charged with maintaining liaison with the reading teacher and continuing the special training programs he or she initiates.

The complexity of the reading process and the wide variation in skills proficiency among secondary school students—as much as ten years, according to standard test data—points to the necessity for smaller classes with opportunities for individual and small-group work focused on reading skills development. As in the case of composition instruction, large classes and heavy workloads make individual and small-group work on reading problems difficult if not impossible to implement.

To the degree that he or she can improve reading skills among students, the English teacher serves the entire faculty. Reading and writing are skills central to almost the entire educational effort of the school. Smaller class size for teachers of English can be the base not only for individual skills development but also for more satisfactory working conditions for all teachers.

Factor 13: Individualizing the Extended Curriculum in Reading and Media

In contrast with most other subjects, English has a particular responsibility to deal with an individualized curriculum in reading and mass-media. Helping students find the "right" book for their needs is a large and complex task, one which requires time to gain a wide familiarity with the adolescent and the literature to which he is attracted. Being familiar with the mass-media of film, television, radio, and other forms about which adolescents need guidance requires great amounts of time on the part of the English teacher–time in addition to the professional reading required of all teachers.

Beyond being familiar with the books and the media which are part of the adolescent's life is the in-class and out-of-class time required to talk with the students about their experiences with literature and media. Given the explicitness and wide ethical poles manifested in modern literature and mass-media, guidance from skilled teachers of English is particularly needed to help youth interpret their experiences in the light of broad social trends and literary conventions. Time and opportunity to talk with their teachers about their individual experiences is a right of students. In large classes headed by English teachers with already full teaching loads, such conferring is not possible.

Factor 14: Development of Skills of Speaking, Listening, and Responding

The most rapid verbal development of humans occurs in the early years of life, when the child is surrounded by what can be called a responsive environment, an environment that he can manipulate and respond to. As he grows older, the school situation becomes less and less a place where he can manipulate and respond. Many studies of classrooms show that it is not uncommon for one person, the teacher, to do 80 per cent of the talking, with students largely limited to one very specialized type of listening.

Modern conceptions of effective classrooms give much more weight to the kind of environment which characterizes the early life of the learner, when he learns so much so fast. Active, direct, pleasurable, even joyful participation is the ideal–talking, listening, moving, grouping and regrouping, giving responses, hearing how others respond to the subject matter, making things and remaking them.

The community must determine the kind of classroom in which it wants its children to develop. The factory image of the school, where youths, as interchangeable parts, sit in orderly rows, hands clasped, silent—that is one model. The workshop model is, for many reasons, favored by sensitive teachers today. The spirit of openness, movement, creativity, interaction, responsiveness, and enthusiasm that the workshop image evokes is desirable, not only for many teachers but also for many, if not most, parents.

The large classes and heavy workloads of the conventional school make the workshop model extremely difficult to attain. The factory model has been the dominant one in twentieth century American schools largely because the "factory school" is more capable of handling large numbers of students in a small space. The average home, if run on the factory model, could house more than thirty children and youth. But no one wants to live that way. The question here is whether we want schools run that way.

The English class, with its major responsibilities for the development of capabilities in speaking and listening, is one place where the workshop model should be developed.

If the community values the development of verbal skills, the learning of verbal reasoning, the learning of skills of and sensitivities to human relationships, it will take steps to assure that the necessary kind of environment be supplied to permit development of such skills. The local decision on desirable class size and workload for English teachers must recognize the reduction of English class size as an important first step in building that environment.

Chapter Three

The Factor Tree: Deciding an Optimum Workload for English Teachers

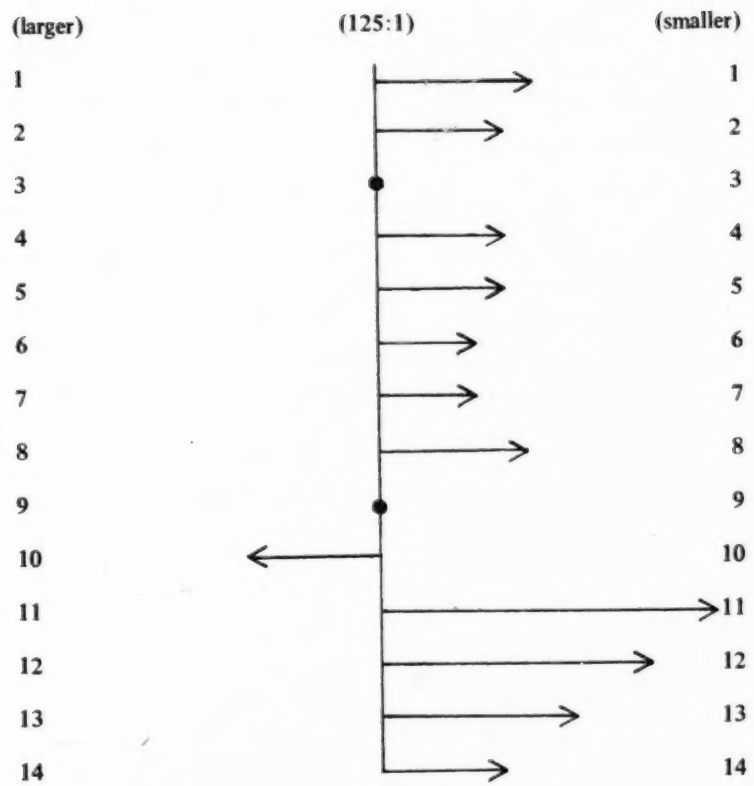
A local school district, as the NCTE policy recommends, should review its workload and class-size policy in a group composed of English teachers, school administrators, school board members, appointed members of the community, and, where possible, students. The "factor tree" sketched on the following page is a device for such a group to represent its collective judgments in arriving at a new workload policy for the district or the school.

In the sketch, the vertical line represents the existing workload practice in the local district, expressed in a ratio such as 125:1. The arrows represent relative degrees of force pointing toward larger workload or smaller workload. The direction of each arrow and the length (degree of force) represent how the group, in its collective judgment, feels about each of the factors outlined in Chapter 2 of this report.

For example, if the committee, after discussion, feels that tension exists between the school and the community about values (Factor 2), the arrow would be drawn to the right, or toward smaller classes, on the grounds that such tension puts additional burdens on the time and effort necessary to explain and clarify the nature of such conflicts as they surface in the many parts of the English curriculum.

If, on the other hand, after discussing Factor 5, the group agrees that, compared with other school districts, the local school has supplied considerable help in the form of support staff and resources, the arrow might be drawn to the left, or toward larger classes.

The discussion of each of the factors should yield an arrow to the left or to the right or no arrow at all (a dot), representing either lack of agreement or agreement that present workload is satisfactory in terms of the requirements of that particular factor.



Appendix B contains an illustration of the "factor tree" process, including a brief record of a discussion of the factors in a hypothetical situation which led to the shaping of the completed factor tree above and a new policy on workload for English teachers.

The factor tree serves as a symbolic representation of the discussion of factors which led to it. It is a means of visualizing and remembering agreements. One could add numbers, such as 0, +1, +2, etc., to give a more numerical quality to the length of the arrows and thus come to an arithmetical conclusion, but that is a matter of taste. What matters is the discussion and the agreements about the factors. The strategy behind the factor-tree device is one of providing a means for ensuring discussion of

most of the major factors which affect decisions about English teacher workload. The underlying assumption of the procedure is that persons of good will can, through rational discussion, arrive at an optimum policy on workload for English teachers in the light of local needs, desires, and conditions.

On the next page is a blank factor tree which can be copied for local use.

After the committee has been appointed, each member can create his own factor tree by considering the fourteen factors and deciding whether each topic calls for a line or arrow extending to the right (smaller classes for English teachers) or to the left (larger classes). When the committee comes together to discuss the factors, the chairman can keep a master chart which represents consensus.

After the tree is completed and the group has reached consensus, a report should be prepared and action taken with the group or agency responsible for making the final decision. The report should include a timetable for the attainment of desirable workloads for English teachers. NCTE policy recommends that no more than five years elapse from the beginning of discussions to the attainment of desirable workload for English teachers.

(DATE) (SCHOOL OR SCHOOL DISTRICT) (NAME)

Present Ratio
(:)

LARGER Factor	SMALLER Factor
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10
11	11
12	12
13	13
14	14

Appendix A

Teaching Load in a School with Differentiated Staffing

Teaching load may not be easy to change, but it is usually easy to perceive. In most schools, teachers have undivided responsibility for teaching certain things to certain students. There is no question about how many students they teach.

Some schools, however, are beginning to redefine roles and differentiate the responsibilities of staff members. Rather than viewing teachers as interchangeable parts, they identify the talents and interests of each person and distribute duties accordingly. Some teachers may act as team leaders. Some give frequent large-group presentations, while others tend to work with individuals and small groups. Certain tasks are assigned to aides or interns.

When teachers share responsibility for the same students, it may not be possible to describe their teaching load in conventional terms. Nevertheless, there is a limit to the load teachers can carry, both as individuals and as departments. If conventional formulas are inappropriate, alternatives are needed.

One school system (Lincoln, Nebraska) is experimenting with a "point system" staffing formula. The number of points allocated to a particular school is approximately the same as the number of students enrolled, although allowances are made for other factors, such as the size of the school and the number of students in special education classes.

The principal of each school determines how the school will be staffed within the point allotment. A full-time regular teacher counts for twenty points (regardless of salary level) and other staff members are "priced" accordingly. For example, team leaders (whose specific responsibilities are determined by the school) cost twenty-two points. Associate teachers, (half-time people who hold teaching certificates but whose duties involve less responsibility than regular teachers) cost eight points. Teacher aides, clerical or instructional, cost one point per hour worked daily (an aide who works a six-hour day costs six points).

A hypothetical school using this system has 1,728 students. Some students take no English classes, but some take more than one, so the English enrollment is 1,658. The English staff is composed of:

Role	Number of People	Points Each	Total Points
Team leader	1	22	22
Teacher	9	20	180
Associate teacher	5	8	40
Teacher aides	8	6	48
			290

One way to compute English teaching load in such a school is first to convert staffing points to familiar terms (290/20 = equivalent of 14.5 teachers). The teaching load can then be figured in the usual way (1,658/14.5 = a ratio of 114:1).

The point system is a device for distributing staff equitably among schools in a system and for providing staffing flexibility at the local level. Although not in itself an answer to the problem of teaching load, it may be of use to schools searching for ways to employ skills of highly qualified teachers as effectively as possible.

Appendix B

Using the Factor Tree: A Hypothetical Case

To illustrate how the "factor tree" chart might work, the following hypothetical case tells of a local committee of teachers, laymen, and administrative staff who held a series of meetings to determine an optimum class size for English instruction.

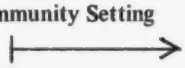
For several meetings, the committee's discussions focused on the fourteen factors sketched in Chapter 2 of this report. Facts and feelings, economics and patterns of spending, and the goals of the school were central parts of the discussions.

Following these general meetings, a date was set to decide on an optimum class size for future implementation. Each member of the group took a blank form and was asked to draw arrows to left or right according to his perceptions of teaching conditions, goals, values, etc., as he viewed and understood them.

On the appointed day, the participants gathered after school in a conference room. Understandably, the direction and length of the arrows on individual charts differed in both direction and length or force, because each viewed the conditions differently. Gradually, through negotiation, persuasion, and the force of evidence, the group agreed on the direction and force of the arrows.

These were their findings:

1. School-Community Setting

L  S

Though the community was relatively well-to-do and middle class, the group concurred that students were not docile, nor did most parents and teachers want them to be. Transiency was high because of depressed circumstances in two major manufacturing plants nearby. It was agreed that the arrow should point to the right.

2. Community Values and Expectations

L S

There was controversy about the direction of this arrow. Though parents were oriented to the value of schooling and felt they imbued students with this value, there had been clear conflict between the conservative views of the community and the views of the English faculty. The group finally agreed that this conflict seemed to point to smaller classes.

3. Physical Plant

L S

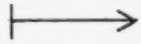
No decision was possible on this factor since the group was concerned with a general policy for the entire district. Some schools were newer and open; others were older and cramped. It was decided that the direction and force of the arrow should be determined later on a school-by-school basis.

4. Financial Resources Available

L S

Though administrators in the group were uncomfortable, teachers and parents agreed that not only could the community supply more help in supporting the schools, there was no reason why resources could not be allocated to provide smaller classes for English instruction, particularly, said parents, if composition were to be stressed.

5. Supportive Staff and Resources

L  S

There was agreement that because of the previous budget cutback, the loss of aides and clerks, the loss of reading specialists and librarians, the loss of department chairman time, and the closing of two resources centers had thrown a burden on English teachers. The arrow was pointed to the right, or to smaller class load.

6. Number and Kinds of Preparation

L S

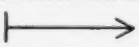
Since the English department had voluntarily set up a large number of elective courses and consequently had a larger than usual number of preparations, teachers argued that they needed smaller classes to allow for preparations. One administrator argued that the English teachers had volunteered to do this and were now seeking to "feather their nest." The laymen, particularly the editor of the newspaper, questioned the administrator on appearing to want to punish initiative. A decision was reached to have a short arrow to the right.

7. Curriculum Development and Innovation

L S

Following discussion of Factor 7, the group again agreed to a short arrow toward smaller classes. The English coordinator called for a longer arrow, pointing out that the six departments had gone through two major curriculum revisions in the 60s and were still engaged in a complete curriculum revision arising out of new trends, the elective curriculum, a North Central evaluation, and newly apparent student needs. The assistant superintendent observed that this was true of most other departments as well.

8. Curriculum Evaluation and Research Responsibilities

L  S

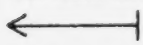
The administrators agreed that they had not adequately contemplated the effects of joint research with the university and the state department of education on teaching loads, and since all English teachers were currrently engaged in a study of reading skills and habits and in developing an "accountability for reading" program, agreement was reached to have a short arrow to the right.

9. Professional Growth and Involvement

L S

Since teachers were fully reimbursed and given increments for both course work and professional activities, a coalition of administrators and laymen forced a no-arrow decision on this. The superintendent's assistant granted that an individual might be given a reduced load, occasionally, but not whole departments. One of the department chairmen sighed.

10. Other Responsibilities

L  S

English teachers in the district, it was revealed, did not have their full share of nonteaching responsibilities. Over mild objections of the teachers, a line was drawn to the left.

11. Teaching Composition

L S

There was little argument about the force of requirements of the composition program. A long arrow was drawn to the right. The high school principal's representative challenged the assertion that all teachers were doing their best to improve composition. The newspaper editor looked startled but said nothing.

12. Reading Skills Development

L S

Since the state legislature had decreed that one semester of reading instruction was to be required in secondary schools, there was general agreement to have the arrow pointing to the right, at least temporarily. The department chairmen argued for a longer arrow because of the suddenness of the legislature's pronouncement.

13. Extended Curriculum in Reading and Media

L S

The laymen agreed with the teachers that keeping up with the flood of books and media, on top of professional and personal reading, was a burden not shared by other faculty. A guidance counselor also agreed, saying that any activity involving one-to-one relationships was necessarily time consuming. Several attempts to discuss controversial books were ruled out of order by the superintendent. The principal's representative muttered something about "those damned book reports," but was otherwise silent.

14. Speaking, Listening, and Responding

L ⟶ S

There was clear division among the teachers and among the administrators on the desirability of the responsive environment, a division reflecting philosophical differences. With the urgent persuasion of the school psychologist, an agreement was reached to have an arrow to the right, not because current patterns showed responsive English environments, but because of a feeling on the part of the majority that they ought to be there. Reduction of class size would make the responsive environment possible. One teacher sniffed "Romantic nonsense," but fatigue had set in, and few wished to argue further.

In a summation session a week later, the committee agreed that the burden of arguments favored smaller English classes and set a three-year schedule to reduce from 125:1 to 110:1. The teacher representatives pointed out that a reduction of only 3 students per class was hardly worth the effort, though one of the department chairmen said, "At least we've made some progress toward recognition of the special needs of English teachers." The assistant superintendent observed that within the general reduction, there could certainly be very sharp reductions in some classes according to their particular characteristics. Since two members of the five-person board of education had participated in the work of the committee, it appeared probable that the board would concur on the new policy.

Appendix C

Some Notes on Procedures for English Departments

Entry into a quest for reduced workload for English teachers, although it can be carried on in a professional manner, nonetheless is in essence a political or quasi-political action. Steps and strategies have to be worked out once decisions on departmental and interdepartmental goals have been reached.

Certainly in any circumstance it will be necessary and wise, at first, to conduct departmental and interdepartmental meetings using the background statement, the discussion of factors, and other materials in this booklet and other sources. Single departments and interschool departments will have to agree on goals, shaped according to local circumstances. Departments may disagree internally and with other departments, but there is little use in taking the quest to boards of education, the public, and the administration until basic decisions are reached.

Given the goals, the departments then must agree on whether the strategies outlined in the preceding pages (and illustrated in Appendix B) are appropriate and desirable. Some may find the strategies too pallid; others might not be able to imagine themselves in conflict situations with board members and administrators as envisioned in the illustration. Adaptations are certainly in order: the pamphlet you hold is not presented as a recipe for success but merely as a plausible alternative to non-action or inadequate action. Adapt it to your needs; make photo-copies of whatever parts serve your purposes.

In situations where teacher-negotiation through unions and associations is a way of life, English teachers will then have to work with union and/or association leaders to make their case for a unique workload policy for English teachers. The negotiating teams will have to be contacted and at least partly persuaded that there is a special case for English. A practice session using the "factor tree" procedure with union or association leaders

can help them become familiar with the procedures you intend to use and also serve as a structured means to inform them of the special case for reduced English teacher workload.

Persuading your colleagues from other disciplines who serve on school district negotiating teams will not be easy, for not only does reducing workload for teachers of one discipline complicate the negotiation package, it also may encourage teachers from other disciplines to set forth arguments for reduced loads for themselves and their colleagues.

At the least, however, even if it becomes ultimately necessary to bypass negotiation teams and approach the school board, the administration, and the public directly, you will have advised your colleagues on the negotiation team that you have a case and intend to pursue it.

Where there is more than one secondary school in the school district, it may be necessary to do some interschool negotiating early because not all secondary English departments in a city or large town will have equal need for reduced class size and teacher load. The assumption in this pamphlet is that English class size and teacher load should, ideally, be worked out on a school-by-school basis. Speaking practically, however, departments in larger districts will probably be unable to involve top adminstration, the school board, and significant persons of the community for more than one "factor tree" discussion. These individuals obviously don't have the time for a school-by-school analysis. What will probably be necessary in larger communities is a quest, first, for a revised "norm" for English teacher workload *across* the district and, second, an understanding that variations up and down from that norm will be worked out with the administration for each school once a new general policy is established. It will probably be apparent that for some "disadvantaged" schools within the district, a ratio of 75:1 may be optimum; for "advantaged" schools a ratio of 125:1 may be optimum. The general policy may therefore have to be a district agreement at 100:1 with interdepartmental agreements that some schools in the district will have heavier, and some lighter, workloads than others.

The English teacher workload question is not—and should never be thought of as—a part of the teacher benefit negotiation package. It is a student benefit package. An English teacher with six classes and two hundred students each day can, of course, survive from day to day and live more or less adequately on the salary and benefits paid by the district. But the English teacher knows what ought to be happening in classes and also knows that it cannot readily happen when students are in crowded and stressful conditions. The theme which must underlie the procedures outlined in this booklet is that reduced workload for English teachers is for the student's benefit. There is no other justification.

Appendix D

Some Further Reading on Class Size and Workload

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The letters ED with following numerals refer to items contained in the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) system, and items so listed can be obtained in microfiche form (for use with a reader-projector) or in hard-copy form by writing to ERIC Document Reproduction Service, P.O. Drawer O, Bethesda, Maryland 20014. Microfiche copies will generally be available at libraries in universities and central offices of larger school systems.